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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a proposal for integrating liberal arts study within teacher education programs for the purpose of improving education through change in the education curriculum, the role of educators, the education of educators, the cooperation of educational agencies, and the place of education and knowledge in society. An extensive literature review and discussions of liberal arts and education goals, a social knowledge system, and societal needs are presented. In the program described, the liberal arts curriculum would provide a comprehensive program of the study of concepts from psychology, sociology, and anthropology which relate to human learning and development. Areas of study from the field of education would include the educational system, the educative process, professional ethics and responsibilities, and teaching functions and skills. The study of liberal arts provides a foundation for the study of education by meeting the goals for the development of intellectual skills, value and belief systems, an attitude of public service, and an overall perspective on the knowledge system. The paper concludes with a discussion of the principles embedded in the proposal and the road to improvement. (Contains 13 references.) (LL)

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INTEGRATING THE STUDY OF LIBERAL ARTS AND EDUCATION

Robert C. Hatfield

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INTEGRATING THE STUDY OF LIBERAL ARTS AND EDUCATION

The education of teachers and the widespread problems in our nation's education system are of concern to all segments of society. With this common dissatisfaction regarding the quality of education it becomes all to easy to place blame for many of the problems in our society on schools and teachers. With such negative perceptions about education among the general population improving the education system within the constraints of resources, current knowledge, and the political process will require a great deal of creativity and cooperation. The proposal presented here is oriented to one of the most significant issues related to this problem and despite the constraints indicated could provide a different and very positive direction on the road to improving the entire field of education.

During the current ongoing surge of interest and concern in nearly all aspects of the education system the need and potential for linking liberal arts study with the study of education is being given some visibility. Capitalizing on this movement could provide the basis for some very critical changes in the preparation of educators and lead to the general improvement of education. This long sought for integration of education and liberal arts could generate very different solutions to the problems faced in the education system. An opportunity is provided by these conditions to improve education across the entire spectrum of society through adding a broader focus and greater depth to the study of education and with how educators do

their job.

An unresolved issue in the relationship between the field of education and liberal arts is the long history of conflict concerning the study of education within the institutions of higher education. This conflict began in ernest during the late 19th century when the need for secondary school teachers increased (Griswald, 1962). Important to note is that at several points in this conflict, during the past 100 years, attempts have been made to establish better relationships between disciplines of study, the liberal arts, and education, and to foster greater cooperation among administrative groups within and across the respective institutions. One of the most extensive and potentially viable efforts to reconcile these differences was described by Hodenfield and Stinnett (1961). Through a series of conferences, professionals from the field, teacher educators and liberal arts faculty were brought together to develop plans for improving these conditions. But the result of these efforts focused more on governance and control instead of on rethinking the goals and contributions of each group. Each group wanted to protect their turf and was less inclined to share and join in a common program to resolve the conflicts.

Change and improvement of course are commonplace in the American tradition. Although in education the changes may seem slow at times an evolution if not a revolution does occur. The ideas proposed here for bringing about an improvement in our education system are predicated on a vision for professional

educators of the future. This vision is oriented to the following conditions becoming commonplace as part of the accepted culture and practice of educators.

1. A common knowledge base including, professional ethics and responsibilities, liberal arts goals, the educative process, and teaching skills is shared by all educators.

2. Educational goals based on a study of the liberal arts are incorporated into the curriculum for students in all educational settings.

3. A systematic process for analyzing student learning problems and providing for their remediation is followed in all education settings.

4. Professional job opportunities are available for educators in a wide variety of settings and for many different purposes.

5. A diverse group of outstanding candidates are recruited to become professional educators.

6. Resources and personnel for developing educational materials and solving educational problems are shared across educational agencies.

7. Communication networks are maintained across the different types of educational agencies linking together the institutions and personnel.

BACKGROUND

Some of the important issues underlying this plan relate to the goals of liberal arts study, the goals of education, the meaning of a knowledge system, and the needs of society. Considerable differences in perspective certainly do exist regarding the meaning of liberal arts. Consequently, we need to provide some parameters here which will clarify the meaning as used in this plan.

Liberal Arts and Education Goals:

The general perspective of liberal arts is very broad and inclusive of all areas of knowledge. However, there is also a focus for this study which is a major key to its value. Griswald (1962) provides this view by stating the purpose of the liberal arts as being, "to awaken and develop the intellectual and spiritual powers in the individual before he enters upon his career, so that he may bring to that career the greatest possible assets of intelligence, resourcefulness, judgment and character" (p. 13).

In Martin's (1981) view a liberal education must extend beyond developing the mind and the disciplines of knowledge. Included in a liberal education is a focus on the whole person consisting of reason and emotion, thought and action, as well as a sense of community and a solidarity with other living things. These added dimensions of a liberal education can then provide the mix of values, reasoning, emotion, community, and development of the mind which enables individuals to become dependent and contributing members of society. This perspective on liberal education is very broad and casts some of the issues in different terms such as community and emotions. But the concept that these goals can provide a common foundation of education for all individuals contributing both to their personal and societal needs lays the basis for a broad but insightful view of the liberal arts.

In a major effort to improve education Mortimer Adler (1982) has attempted to stimulate the improvement of schools by

suggesting a k-12 curriculum based on his concept of the liberal arts. The basis for his plan is that the schools most important objective is a general, liberal, humanistic education to prepare our youth for continued learning as adults. This proposal for a k-12 curriculum includes three primary areas of knowledge; personal growth, public citizenship, and economics. He also includes in his plan an emphasis on different modes of learning and the skills of learning. These ideas taken as a set of goals and processes relate strongly to the essential goals of liberal learning. Adler's proposals certainly suggest the need to prepare educators who have the knowledge and the capacity to teach the goals of a liberal arts program.

One of the most exciting but neglected books written on education was by Belth (1965) in which he described the field of education as the basis for the study of knowledge across all disciplines. Central to Belth's argument is his analysis of the procedures for acquiring knowledge. These procedures include exploring, describing, explaining, reasoning, inventing, and developing models and theories, which together provide the substance for the study of education and the structures for knowledge. According to Belth these procedures cut across all disciplines and areas of knowledge and the function of education is to study these procedures and to explore how they result in the development of human powers. Extending Belth's ideas into some of the current efforts for improving education suggests a strong linkage to the study of liberal arts with a focus on

developing individual capacities for reasoning and processing information.

Recent publications have been issued by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (Marzano, 1992; Marzano, et al. 1988) which provide the incentive for and information on enhancing thinking and learning skills through a school curriculum. These publications provide a broad view of these issues as they are being developed from research studies. The concept of thinking or reasoning skills combined with the processes for using these skills in connection with different subject areas or disciplines provides the basis for some of the current movements in education. Examples of these skills include critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, relationships, comparing, and integrating. Underlying these issues is our expanding knowledge of brain functions and the ways to structure knowledge.

The study of liberal arts should provide a foundation for the study of education through meeting the goals for, the development of intellectual skills, value and belief systems, an attitude of public service, and an overall perspective of the knowledge system. Current requirements in teacher education programs which include a background in general education are not usually in the same context as the description and meaning given here to the liberal arts. Instead, general education has come to mean a broad based study of several disciplines which are intended to represent an introduction to basic concepts in

science, math, language and social sciences. This study of general education is primarily to enhance the learning of the prospective teacher. The focus given here expands on the purpose now accorded to general education. In this proposal the study of liberal arts would enhance the learning of the prospective educator and it would also provide the prospective teacher with an area of knowledge to incorporate into the curriculum they are responsible for teaching.

A Social Knowledge System:

Central to a liberal education which meets today's needs is an overall view of a knowledge system. This system is inclusive of our knowledge, how it is developed, how it is managed, and how it is used. Insight into the nature of the system is provided by Holzner (1983) in a model which brings together all the diverse segments of society which have a role in this system. Holzner's concept of the knowledge system includes a set of categories providing for the production, the resources, and the use of knowledge. The resource system includes activities for organization, storage, retrieval and distribution. Within this structure we can identify the scientist, the librarian, the Research & Development person, the teacher, and the problem solver. We can also identify the wide variety of media formats needed to fulfill these activities and hurdles which often limit access to knowledge. Because Holzner includes all aspects of knowledge in his scheme and is not limited to the scientific, we find a useful orientation to the synthesis and use of knowledge.

Indeed this whole concept of a system of knowledge brings together the multiple activities needed within the society to manage this important part of our culture. Improving this system should be a concern of all educators and fits very closely with Belth's (1965) advocacy of education as the foundation of all disciplines. I do not wish to promote the terminology or meaning that education is a discipline, however the concept that within the study of education is the need to explore new ways to acquire, analyze and organize knowledge appears very compatible with this concept of a knowledge system.

Including Holzner's concept of a knowledge system into the study of liberal arts and education, and using it as one of the primary pillars on which to build the integration of these two areas of study serves a variety of purposes. However, the major issue, as stated earlier, in bringing together these areas of study is to formulate some common goals and to develop a mutual need across educational institutions and professional educators. Attaining that potential could be achieved through the inclusive nature of the model presented here.

In an effort to add meaning to the organization and value of knowledge Perkins (1986) has cast knowledge in terms of design. In his terms knowledge is one of action requiring critical and creative thinking and is not a passive organ of information in storage. By considering four questions Perkins places this view of knowledge squarely at center stage where the educative process takes place. These four questions about knowledge are;

1. What is its purpose (or purposes)?
2. What is its structure?
3. What are model cases of it?
4. What are arguments that explain and evaluate it?

Considering these questions in the context of teaching and the educative process provides a strong argument for a knowledge system and the need to learn this system.

A further note to consider regarding the knowledge system is based on the Gardner's (1983) work regarding intelligence. His studies on the multiple intelligences of humans provides an additional dimension to the categories of knowledge and the nature of their elements. This comprehensive perspective indicates a human capacity for intelligence in the areas of linguistics, music, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and personal and interpersonal learning. In addition Gardner identifies symbols, patterns and problem solving as key processes for learning in each area. The development of each of these intelligences, and their basic symbols and patterns provides individuals with a broad capacity for perceiving, processing and acting on knowledge. This concept of our learning potential adds to the importance of developing a broad view of knowledge.

A person who has studied the liberal arts should have developed personal knowledge in the areas of: self concept; values; reasoning and problem solving skills; public attitudes; organization, sources, types and use of a knowledge system; and

the symbols and patterns integral to the major areas of intelligence. Further, each individual should have the capacity to act on this knowledge and to possess the capability to pursue new information and knowledge. In an information age each individual needs to have a broad perspective of knowledge and the capacity to continually build on their previous learning.

Societal Needs:

The need for improvement in the overall education system, the extent to which the system impacts on the total society, and the role of educators is also being given considerable attention by people in the business world.

In their book on "Trend Tracking" Celente & Milton (1990) give us the following view on the status of education.

> Our school system was designed to meet the needs of a growing industrial society. It taught people how to read, write, and do some arithmetic... It didn't teach them how to think. It didn't teach them how to ask questions, how to analyze problems, or how to find solutions. It didn't have to, since management did all the thinking... But the needs of our society have changed, and our school system no longer meets them... If we think globally, you can see causes and effects of the decline of our school system. (p.85)

Kearns & Doyle (1989) provide an excellent perspective on both the importance of education to our society at large as well as to business, and a goal which our educational programs should strive to achieve. They state that;

> one of the principal reasons we value freedom is the promise of abundance - food for the hungry, housing for the homeless, clothing for the naked, medical care for the ill. Material abundance is the precondition of artistic and intellectual accomplishment. Once it was the province of the select few. Today, we have it within our power to extend those opportunities to whole

> societies. That is the task before us. That is the opportunity education affords. (p. 2)

Further, they indicate that the goal of education should be to "nurture, develop, and encourage human intelligence. For it is human intelligence that produces wealth - not property, or machines or physical plant. It is human ingenuity that counts." (p.2)

An additional perspective on these conditions is being generated from economic developments and which Stewart (1991), describes as intellectual capital. The concept of intellectual capital includes such areas of knowledge as patents, processes, management skills, technologies, information on customers and suppliers, and general experiences. He also indicates that a collective knowledge of this information can be achieved by drawing on the know-how of all employees within a business.

These perspectives on the status of education and schools in the U.S. not only indicate a strong need for change in the operation and function of schools but also help clarify the relationship of education to the rest of society. It's obvious that these calls for improvement do not just focus on improving production skills, or basic literacy. They emphasize the need to broaden our perspective, thinking ability, and problem solving capacity, both individually and collectively.

The Information Age as a descriptor for our future economy and society implies that every capable person will need to become educated to their utmost capacity and will need a lifelong commitment to continue their education. Knowledge becomes the

coinage of society. In order to meet the needs for this revolution in our culture many diverse institutions, and professional as well as specialized educators will be needed. The current system, providing little in the way of facilitating mechanisms to link institutions, educators or resources, will need major changes to meet these conditions.

PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVEMENT

The focus of this proposal for change is on fulfilling the vision statements indicated earlier and the background conditions. The following description, of course, can only provide a direction and cannot include all the necessary details needed for the overall design and implementation of new programs. However, by stating a vision for the future and identifying a focus or orientation to attain this vision individuals and agencies have a starting point to initiate improvements based on this perspective.

Integrating the study of education with a liberal arts program would require a number of conditions to be present. A key issue underlying these conditions is to consider the goals of a liberal arts program as one of the basic areas which all students need to learn and for which all professional educators are responsible to teach. This expectation and condition creates a situation in which all students of education have one common teaching area and one in which they can jointly develop their knowledge of education and the primary teaching skills for curriculum design, instructional management, and personal

counseling and testing.

In this program the liberal arts curriculum would provide one leg of the knowledge needed by all professional educators. In addition to the liberal arts study, a comprehensive program of study for educators would include concepts from psychology, sociology, and anthropology which relate to human learning and development, and societal needs. Areas of study from the field of education would include the educational system, the educative process, professional ethics and responsibilities, and teaching functions and skills. Basic to this integrated study is developing a perspective of the social knowledge system which can serve as the conceptual focus linking all areas of study together. Each educator would also expand on this common background with the study of one or more subject areas or disciplines for their teaching specialization.

The plan suggested here is to create a program which initially integrates the study of education with liberal arts and then relates these to a specialized teaching area. In other words the initial study of education is tied to the teaching of liberal arts goals and includes all prospective educators regardless of their subject or area of specialization. This focus is in contrast to the current process of just relating the techniques of teaching to a specialized subject area, i.e. science.

Engaging in an integrated study of education and the liberal arts will involve a process which incorporates the use of a comprehensive model of the educative process [see note 1] in

conjunction with building a perspective of the knowledge system. By building a curriculum design for professional education to attain the goals of liberal arts and education based on these two conceptual models a real integrated study could be created. Developing such a program would, of course, require some organizational changes in higher education institutions that encourage and enable individuals to initiate new designs.

Integrating these ideas into a program for the preparation of educators would create opportunities which have eluded us in the past. For instance, by using this approach all educators would develop a common core of knowledge which includes a professional study program related to the knowledge and teaching of liberal arts. This program integration would provide one area of common goals for colleges and other educational agencies linking them together in areas dealing with educational problems and knowledge. This condition could improve the articulation of programs across institutions, expand the resources for developing educational products, and provide greater focus and interest in solving educational problems and conducting research.

Further development for the advanced study of educator specializations might include personal counseling and testing, curriculum design, instructional management, and institutional policy and management. In contrast to this professional study some individuals might choose to engage only in specific training or scholarly programs in the content of one specialized teaching area. This level of preparation and knowledge would serve an

important role in many institutions. However, where comprehensive educational programs are provided the major responsibility for teaching should be done by individuals who have pursued the integrated study of liberal arts and education in addition to their specialized teaching area.

The study of liberal arts and education, as outlined above, will also serve needs beyond the typical k-12 programs. In this sense the program would include educators regardless of the setting in which they might work, whether it be in k-12 schools, pre-schools, higher education institutions, museums, corporations, professional associations or other agencies which provide educational programs. The need for professional educators across all segments of society is rapidly increasing and will continue to expand with the changing and increasingly complex world. With such a broad range of potential work settings this program would greatly expand the pool of candidates who study education and would bring together students with a wide range of interests and talents.

One common denominator for this diverse set of educational settings and educators is provided by the social knowledge system which includes the development, organization and storage, distribution, and use of knowledge. Developing this overview of the meaning, organization and function of a knowledge system as a major goal in the liberal arts program provides educators with the perspective for attaining the integration of multiple fields of knowledge and professional roles suggested in this proposal.

With this kind of preparation for all professional educators, greater communication, a broader curriculum of study, and an increased emphasis on meeting public and individual educational needs and expectations could be achieved. Creating a program of study which integrates the important knowledge and skills from both liberal arts and education can also provide the foundations necessary for living in the new age of knowledge and information where all individuals need to become highly educated and continue their education during their entire lifetime.

This proposal is in great contrast to the many current efforts among politicians and educators which emphasizes testing and evaluation of students and teachers as the basis for change and improvement of the education system. No doubt there is a place for these measures in the system but they certainly do not provide a strong basis for determining the what and the how for making the necessary improvements in teaching and the educative process.

PRINCIPLES EMBEDDED IN THE PROPOSAL

The following principles reflect conditions described here and may provide additional meaning to the conceptual perspectives embedded in the proposal. These principles can also be used to further elaborate and examine the ideas described by relating them to current literature and research studies within the field. The principles identified are;

1. Problem solving, reasoning, analytic, and self-directed learning skills enhance a person's learning ability.
2. Personal attitudes and beliefs are key aspects of

independent learning and personal development.

3. Professional discourse and problem solving which cuts across all educators is facilitated through a common conceptual perspective of the social knowledge system and educative process.

4. Providing a wide range of career opportunities and professional responsibilities in education attracts a broad diversity of outstanding people to the field.

5. The practice of professional educators in all sectors of society is based on a common set of professional ethics and responsibilities.

6. A person's education can be stimulated and enhanced by teachers through directing the educative process.

7. Conceptualizing the overall knowledge system enhances a person's ability to learn, use and apply knowledge.

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT

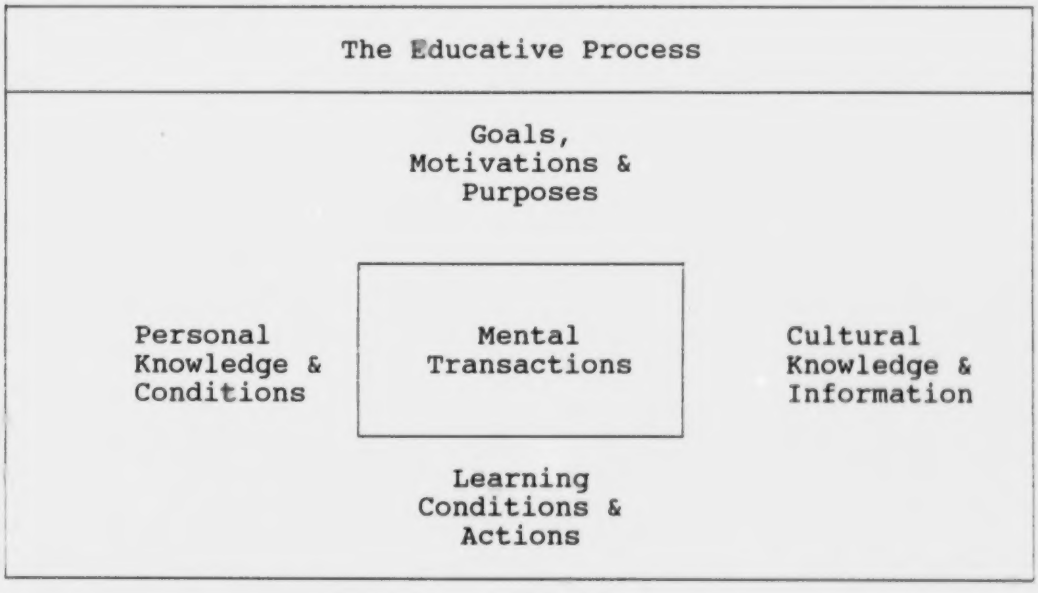
We currently hear education experts, learning experts, business leaders, human development experts and politicians espousing the need for all individuals to become more knowledgeable in a personal, public and economic sense. Changing our educational system to achieve these goals more fully will not occur without a change in the underlying orientation of educator responsibilities and of the necessary preparation to fulfill these responsibilities. Expanding the responsibilities of educators to address learning and thinking skills and establishing their role for solving student learning problems through an organized process also enhances the professional challenge for the educator and places less focus on the organization and management of the educational system. Several references to the business world have been included here and need to be given their appropriate place, but in the process of

improving the educational system it is critical to think in terms of people and not products. Education is not a product oriented activity, but unfortunately confusion over this issue frequently leads to poor decision making.

The thrust of this proposal is on improving education through changes in the educational curriculum, the role of educators, the education of educators, the cooperation of educational agencies, and the place of education and knowledge in our society. Achieving these changes and the vision on which they are based are much more dependent on the creativity and cooperation of individuals than on adding more funding and policy initiatives. Meeting the educational needs of our society is vital to everyone and the form taken by these changes will shape our future. In a democracy such important issues are the concern of everyone and need not be left, and should not be left to the government to resolve.

Notes

(1) The educative process is represented by a conceptual model incorporating the key factors which influence and guide a person's mental transactions for acquiring information and knowledge. Knowledge of this process enables educators to move beyond the presentation and directing mode, to the identification of limitations and/or problems that individuals have in learning. The following diagram shows the key areas included in this process.



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